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FM AMEMBASSY ASHGABAT
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 0760
INFO RUCNCLS/ALL SOUTH AND CENTRAL ASIA COLLECTIVE PRIORITY
RUCNCIS/CIS COLLECTIVE PRIORITY
RUCNMEM/EU MEMBER STATES COLLECTIVE PRIORITY
RUEHAK/AMEMBASSY ANKARA PRIORITY 3740
RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING PRIORITY 1558
RUEHKO/AMEMBASSY TOKYO PRIORITY 1425
RUEHIT/AMCONSUL ISTANBUL PRIORITY 1994
RHMFIUU/CDR USCENTCOM MACDILL AFB FL PRIORITY
RUEHVEN/USMISSION USOSCE PRIORITY 2496
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC PRIORITY
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHDC PRIORITY
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC PRIORITY
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC PRIORITY
RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHDC PRIORITY

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SENSITIVE
SIPDIS

STATE FOR SCA/CEN; DRL

E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PHUM](#) [TX](#)
SUBJECT: TURKMENISTAN: MAY 6 PRISONER PARDON DECREE
REVEALS NO NAMES OF INTEREST

¶1. (U) Sensitive but unclassified. Not for public Internet.

¶2. (U) The May 6 edition of Neytralniy Turkmenistan published the presidential order pardoning another group of prisoners in honor of the Victory Day holiday on May 9. Post reviewed the list of those released, and of the 908 names listed, identified no prisoners of interest. Colleagues at the OSCE Centre also reviewed the list, with similar results. The vast majority of those released appear to have been petty criminals sentenced in 2007 or 2008.

¶3. (U) Six persons on the list were sentenced in 2003 or 2002, and one name was included on the list without information on the date of his sentencing (Arslan Nurmammedov, convicted by Kopetdag district court of Ashgabat city). Earlier press statements had indicated that some foreign prisoners would be pardoned. However, as is traditional, their names were not included in the list. Therefore, we do not know how many foreign citizens were freed.

¶4. (SBU) The two journalists, Hajiyev and Amanklichev, who along with Ogulsapar Muradova were jailed in late 2006, were not on the list. Nor did we find the names of remaining Jehovah's Witness conscientious objectors Ashirgeldiyev or Shakhmuradov--both still serving suspended sentences. The name of former Turkmen ambassador to the OSCE, Batyr Berdiev, was likewise absent.

¶5. (SBU) COMMENT: President Berdimuhamedov is carrying out his promise to release prisoners multiple times throughout the year instead of following Niyazov's annual pardoning tradition. Nevertheless, it would be a further step in the right direction if some of the people jailed in 2003 who were simply relatives of someone involved in the 2002 attack on President Niyazov's motorcade, or some of the more high-profile people like those mentioned above, were added to future amnesty lists. END COMMENT.
CURRAN